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FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE
PANAMA BUREAU
DRAWER 927
APO MIAMI 34004

8 December 1981
MPA #1042

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS

THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT : Monthly Report -- Panama Bureau -- November 1981

I. GENERAL

A. The bureau's monitor staffing situation, which had been generally tight since the inception of the Central American remote monitoring system two years ago, took a sudden and unexpected turn for the worse during the month. [redacted] a top monitor supervisor with over STAT years experience, announced her intention to resign due to pressing family and business commitments. [redacted] is presently on annual leave to STAT followed by extended LWOP to determine if there is some way to accomodate these commitments short of resignation. Planned retirements by two other long-time monitors also are scheduled in early 1982. With three trainees now on board, the bureau has begun recruiting for at least two more. Thus, by mid-FY82 we could be operating with more than one/fifth of our monitor staff in trainee status.

B. An unexpected visit by the leader of a survey crew of the Panamanian Ministry of Public Works brought the first apparently serious challenge to the bureau's occupation of its present operations site since the Canal Treaties were signed in 1979. The survey crew chief was seeking our permission for his men to pass through the bureau's antenna field to survey for the long-planned Panamanian Pacific Coast Highway. He noted incidentally that the route of the highway was being changed, and the new route probably would require the removal of several of our antennas. Quick checks with U.S. Southern Command Treaty Affairs Staff and the 193d Infantry Brigade Directorate of Facilites Engineers confirmed that the new route would place the road through our antenna field. The bureau quickly supplied DFE with an estimate of the considerable damage to our operation which could be expected if the road were to go through. At month's end the Southcom Treaty Affairs Staff representative advised us that the U.S. side would reject the route change.

C. Due to a series of night-time burglaries and break-ins in various Ft. Clayton housing areas, including both areas in which bureau staffers

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reside, the bureau is coordinating with the Program Dvelopment Group support officer to investigate ways to improve residential security. Thus far, only one FBIS house has been broken into, that belonging to Deputy Chief [redacted] Fortunately, the burglers made a hasty retreat before STAT anything could be stolen after encountering Mike's 80 lb four-legged security guard, Max.

II OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

1. After some 18 1/2 years with the bureau, Monitor Supervisor [redacted] went on extended leave without pay to take care of an ex- STAT panding family business which may cause her to resign.

2. The remote tuning facility in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, became fully operational during the month. Initial efforts on the circuit have been devoted mostly to cruising, and have provided new information on the networking of Tegucigalpa's Radio America, Guatemala City Radio Fabulosa, and Guatemala City Radio Nuevo Mundo, leading to new sourcelines.

3. Clandestine radios drew extensive attention during the month. Two new anti-Castro clandestines were intercepted. Radio Torch of Marti was monitored for some time before it was decided it may be U.S.-based. Coverage was dropped. The second, Radio Mambi, was heard only once. A third anti-Cuban clandestine, Radio Free Cuba, has not been heard since mid-October.

4. Radio Venceremos, the clandestine beamed to El Salvador, which had expanded its programming in October, added a special Sunday program on a new frequency to receive messages from the "brother peoples of the world." The programs are providing unique cruising information on the Venceremos radio.

5. The bureau provided extensive backstopping for Paraguay Bureau's LATIN coverage due to problems mainly in LATIN's New York transmitter.

B. Communications

1. The bureau's AUTOVON line (287-4001) remains out of service at month's end after being severed early in the month. Repeated efforts to have the line repaired have been futile because it carries a low restoration priority. Efforts will now be made to raise the priority.

2. A U.S. Army Communications Command representative visited the bureau 25 November to provide training for bureau personnel in use of the new "Dimension PBX" telephone system. The recently activated system is in use on most telephones in the former Canal Zone. When fully activated, several years from now, the system will offer numerous conveniences and could

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replace the "key system" currently in use in the bureau.

III ADMINISTRATION

A. Personnel

A small ceremony was held at the bureau 19 November to mark the promotion of Administrative Assistant [redacted] to NM 8 and to present 15-year service certificates to monitor [redacted] and Teletypist [redacted] STAT STAT STAT

IV VISITS

To the Bureau: [redacted] Deputy Chief, Operations Group; Ltc Manny Fernandez, Treaty Plans Officer, U.S. Southern Command Treaty Affairs Staff; Staff Sergeant Ingram, USACC, Panama; [redacted] STAT STAT STAT

[redacted] STAT

Chief, Panama Bureau, FBIS

Attachments:
Monthly Production Report
Operations Attachment
Engineering Attachment

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